



# SHIRLEY N. WEBER, Ph.D.

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE

Elections Division | 1500 11<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor | Sacramento, CA 95814  
Tel 916.657.2166 | Fax 916.653.3214 | [www.sos.ca.gov](http://www.sos.ca.gov)

April 12, 2023

## Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC)

April 5, 2023, Meeting Minutes

### 1. The meeting was called to order at 2:01 p.m.

Daneka Huynh introduced the five new members to the committee: Janet Bernabe, Jeffrey Reeder, Karduz Nguyen, Paul Burke, and Savaliiolefilmu (Val) Jacobo.

### 2. Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum

Roll was called and quorum was established.

The following participants were marked as present:

#### Committee Members

- Armando Salud
- Deanna Kitamura
- Jacqueline Coto
- Janet Bernabe
- Jeffrey Reeder
- Karduz Nguyen
- Naindeep Singh
- Paul Burke
- Pedro Hernandez
- Ramal Lamar-EI
- Savaliiolefilmu (Val) Jacobo

#### Secretary of State Staff

- Jana Lean  
Chief of Elections
- Joanna Southard  
Assistant Chief of Elections
- Mike Somers  
Election Security Manager
- Daneka Huynh  
Language Access Coordinator

- NaKeshia Robinson  
Information Technology  
Supervisor II
- Todd Ross  
Information Technology  
Specialist I
- Adam Quintana  
Policy & Planning Manager,  
Voter's Choice Act
- Erric Garris  
Deputy Secretary of State,  
Legislative Affairs

### 3. LAAC Members' Updates

Armando Salud

- Yolo County is continuing to hold their local LAAC meetings but is seeing turnout consistently decline. They may explore changing the frequency of their meetings and are open to any advice/suggestions from other counties who may be experiencing the same situation on how to increase turnout and engagement.
- Yolo County is currently preparing for an all vote-by-mail special election for the City of Davis on May 2. No recruitment of poll-workers necessary for this election, but they will be utilizing the SOS's interpreter services.

Deanna Kitamura

- Her organization has compiled a report on the sixteen counties they did poll monitoring for and are working on creating a composite of that report that will be made public and will be shared with the LAAC.
- They have also been working on outreach regarding AB 884.

Jacqueline Coto

- Her organization has been working on outreach regarding SB 846, which involves the Motor Voter program; they are concerned that voter registration changes may have a negative effect on language preference/accessibility and the ability for voters to choose their party preference.

Janet Bernabe

- No updates.

Jeffrey Reeder

- No updates.

Karduz Nguyen

- No updates.

Naindeep Singh

- No updates.

Paul Burke

- No updates.

Pedro Hernandez

- Reported on AB 1416 which would allow counties to place additional information on ballots and he discussed how this might affect language access and translation services.
- He has been researching how language preferences are reported.

Ramal Lamar-EI

- They are continuing statewide efforts to register Niger Congo speakers to vote, navigating around the English only materials, and trying to see how more African languages can be represented.

Savaliiolefilmu (Val) Jacobo

- No updates.

Julia Keh, on behalf of Dean Logan

- Los Angeles' next local LAAC meeting on May 18; reported on their subcommittee's efforts to recruit new members, which has been successful. They are also looking to concentrate on recruiting poll workers.

#### **4. SOS Updates**

Office of Voting Systems Technology Assessment (OVSTA)

- Todd Ross from OVSTA reported that the department is continuing their work in assessing voting machines and their language functions. They are in the process of testing 3 different systems: ES&S, Hart, and Dominion; all three are tested for any federal languages under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, as well as any languages required under CA Elections Code section 14201.
- Pedro suggested at the next meeting for information to be provided on which languages Dominion is certified to provide materials in, since their voting equipment is utilized by a majority of counties.

Voter's Choice Act (VCA)

- Adam Quintana introduced himself and his work with VCA counties, including those that are becoming VCA counties and those that are undergoing the renewal process. Adam had no updates but thanked the LAAC for their assistance in providing guidance to VCA counties on language accessibility.

- Deanna asked which new counties are moving to VCA model and Adam responded that Placer and Humboldt are currently in the process, but no final decision yet.
- Val asked Adam to explain the difference between the VCA and the EAP (Election Administration Plan). Adam explained that counties must submit an EAP to the SOS for review to receive guidance about their efforts to transition to the VCA model and to meet all the guidelines that are mandated. He explained the benefits of the VCA model including expanded voting.
- Jacqueline asked for an update on Imperial County's movement to a VCA model. Adam said there are some challenges that the county is trying to overcome including funding issues for outreach and voter education, as well as expanding election administration and voter services. He said that it is unclear what the outcome will be and if Imperial will be able to make the transition.
- Pedro suggested providing an ICS file (calendar file) to counties who are interested in transitioning or are current counties in the renewal process that would auto-populate all the VCA deadlines in Outlook to help counties keep track of them more easily.

#### Legislative Affairs

- Erric Garris reported that the legislature is close to their first policy committee deadline, April 28, so that fiscal committees can begin hearing bills. There are numerous bills that may affect SOS and elections administration. Some bills that the Secretary's office is focused on right now include:
  - [SCA 1](#) which would change the ballot questions for recalls, which the Secretary is sponsoring.
  - [AB 1559](#) which focuses on election data preservation and retention, which is also being sponsored by the Secretary of State.
  - [SB 437](#) concerning filing deadlines for presidential candidates, which is also being sponsored by the Secretary.
  - [AB 1219](#) which focuses on ballot design advisory recommendations.
  - [SB 25](#) which focuses on declarations of candidacy and making such declarations while out-of-state.
  - [SB 846](#), which would make changes to the Motor Voter program.
- SOS is waiting to declare their endorsements for most bills until amendments have been attached to bills.

#### 5. [AB 884](#) Discussion

- Deanna presented on AB 884, which would create new state thresholds for languages that require the translation of election materials. There would also be new county thresholds and the translated election materials would include

votable ballots. The thresholds are still a work in progress and currently being discussed.

- Paul asked about the use of translators and would like the bill to include a review process for the translations.
- Paul asked about getting data and reports on the usage of translated voting materials, and Deanna responded that there are not currently any reports on the usage of translated materials, only voters' language preference.
- Karduz mentioned that this bill could create challenges for large counties, such as LA or Orange County. He also asked for more information on how SOS conducts their review of translated materials. Joanna Southard from SOS explained the procedures that SOS follows, which includes reviews of translations by an advisory committee and public reviews of the translated materials.

## **6. Presentation on African Languages in California**

- This will be moved to the next meeting's agenda.

## **7. Outreach to No Party Preference Voters Ahead of the March 2024 Presidential Primary Election**

- Pedro talked about how the LAAC is looking to create guidelines regarding this issue so that language voters can understand how the presidential primary works for No Party Preference (NPP) voters. Pedro mentioned the possibility of creating a working group to study this issue. The LAAC will look to add this to the next meeting's agenda so that action can be taken on the creation of a working group for this issue.
- Erric noted to look at [AB 292](#), which is a bill that would modify the NPP ballot.
- Karduz asked if the parties have a deadline to announce their intention as to how they're going to hold their primary. Daneka responded that the parties do have a deadline for declaring if they will allow crossover voting.

## **8. Bilingual Poll Workers Survey Update**

- Daneka presented on the post-election survey given to county ROVs regarding their recruitment of bilingual poll workers. She thanked the LAAC for their recent feedback and said they are working on incorporating that feedback into a future version of the survey. Further opportunities to offer more feedback on the changes will be made after the survey has been updated. The SOS will also be releasing the data for this past election cycle and the report soon.

## 9. Committee Chair/Co-Chairs

- Daneka asked for nominations for a committee chair or co-chairs.
- Karduz made a motion nominating Pedro and Jeffrey seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.
- Janet made a motion volunteering herself as a co-chair and Jeffrey seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

## 10. Public Comments and Future Agenda Items

- Public Comments:
  - No public comments were made.
- Future Agenda Items:
  - Outreach to No Party Preference Voters Ahead of the March 2024 Presidential Primary Election
    - Action Item: Create Working Group
  - High School/Youth Voter Outreach
    - Karduz proposed a future agenda item that would begin a discussion about educating high school students on language accessibility in voting and on how the NPP process works mainly regarding presidential elections.
  - Local Community Group Presentations
    - Val proposed having local community groups that are engaged with language accessibility issues give presentations to the LAAC. Pedro responded that groups that wish to make a presentation can make that known to the LAAC so that scheduling can be discussed.
  - Non-Profit Outreach/Listening Sessions
    - Janet proposed having the LAAC reach out to non-profit groups which often have stronger and closer connections to communities that are affected by language access issues. Further discussion was held regarding how to approach setting up listening sessions so that the LAAC can possibly hear the insights from community groups and non-profits working across California.
  - Presentation on African Languages in California (Ramal)

There was discussion over whether the LAAC meetings should be moved to earlier in the day. Daneka will seek to gain input on this question from LAAC members via an email survey.

**11. Adjournment at 4:00 p.m.**

Next meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, June 7, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.